Handout 5.1: UNDERLYING BELIEFS GUIDING FAMILY MEETINGS

- Respect for the integrity of the family unit and extended family
- Respect for diverse cultures and the ability to maximize cultural competence
- Children need continuity in their family relationships for their healthy growth and development
- Best outcomes for children come from the sharing of power between the state and family
- Opportunities for parents to feel responsible for their children and themselves
- Crisis as Opportunity and Motivator for Change
- Families have strengths that can be tapped to make positive changes
- People can change with the right education and support
Handout 5.2: PHASES OF FAMILY MEETINGS

• PRE-PLANNING ACTIVITIES

• BEGINNINGS

• MIDDLES

• ENDINGS

• POST-MEETING events and follow-through
Handout 5.3: FAMILY MEETINGS: EMERGING CONSIDERATIONS

- How is a ‘family meeting’ defined?
- What are the varying purposes of family meetings?
- When in the life of the case should family meetings be held?
- Who will facilitate the family meetings?
- Who should attend?
- Where should family meetings be held?
- How will confidentiality be protected?
- How will self-determination be promoted?
Handout 5.4: FAMILY MEETING: PRE-PLANNING

- Concern about immediate safety of the child
- Obtaining consent for the meeting from birth parents
- Defining the family
- Explaining the purpose and the process
- Inviting family members and service providers
- Involving offenders and children (preparing statements in advance)
- Soliciting the views of those not attending
- Defining and clarifying participants’ roles
- Coordinating the logistics (date, time, space, transportation, food, supervision of children, etc.)
Handout 5.5: FAMILY MEETING: STAGES

**Beginnings - Introduction**

- Culturally relevant welcome (prayer, song, poem, silence)
- Reiteration of purpose and process
- Introduction of participants and their relationship to child
- Ground rules
- Agreement on the goal of conference
- Review of participants’ role

**Middles - Information Sharing and Conflict Management**

- Case social worker reviews/presents facts of the case – others share related information
- Focus on: Where are we? How did we get here? What are the strengths? What are the barriers to safety, permanency and well-being? What will happen next? When?
- Family members react and ask questions on what has been presented
- Family may meet alone to develop plan that protects/safeguards child, addresses placement/permanency options or options are reviewed together

**Endings - Reaching a Decision**

- Options and plans are outlined with family, agency and service providers’ reactions and input
- Details get specified: tasks/activities, timeframes and consequences
- Resources are planned and supported
- Follow-up activities are agreed to
**Handout 5.6: CHECKLIST FOR FAMILY MEETINGS**
(Adapted from materials developed by Dee Unterbach for NRCFCPP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for Conference</th>
<th>Purpose (Goals)</th>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Review Case History</td>
<td>□ Review goals with family</td>
<td>□ Who should be involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Review Reason for Referral/Cause for Allegations</td>
<td>□ Allow for reactions or expression of feeling</td>
<td>□ How is “family” defined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Determine Purpose or Goals for Holding Family Meeting</td>
<td>□ Elicit family input to plan of action</td>
<td>□ Which other family formal and informal supports should be there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Pre-Meeting Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Where will meeting be held?</td>
<td>□ What should content of agenda be?</td>
<td>□ Have all facts been compiled?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ When and how often in the life of the case will the meeting be held?</td>
<td>□ Who will facilitate?</td>
<td>□ Have all relevant participants been contacted and prepared for what to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ What time of day?</td>
<td>□ How should meeting be introduced?</td>
<td>expect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ How much time will be needed?</td>
<td>□ What are the key issues that need to be addressed?</td>
<td>□ Child, if age appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ What are the transportation needs?</td>
<td>□ What are plans for when conflict arises, for case planning and for permanent</td>
<td>□ Parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ What other logistics should be considered: i.e. food, cultural traditions?</td>
<td>options?</td>
<td>□ Foster parents or other caregivers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                                                                                 |                                                                                  | □ Other family members?                                                    |
                                                                                 |                                                                                  | □ Other collateral parties?                                                |
</code></pre>